

## **CBERS After Action Report**

The main issues that came from CBER Seminars around the state were:

1. Involve Virginians with disabilities and seniors in the planning process from the beginning – plan with us, not for us – nothing about us without us – were all recurring themes
2. Involve key players including the emergency management and response communities, business and funding authorities, as well as the general public including Virginians with disabilities and seniors to ensure needs are known and increase the chances they'll be met.
3. Homes, living facilities and day facilities need additional resources and information in order to effectively prepare for Virginians with disabilities and seniors including templates for disaster plans.
4. Shelters need to know what can be done to incorporate Virginians with disabilities and seniors into a general population shelter, which will lessen the need for "special needs" shelters. They also need to know specifics for medical conditions and disabilities.
5. Preparedness, including evacuations and sheltering, is an individual responsibility
6. There need to be more meetings, classes and workshops (at the local level) as time goes on and changes are made.

A few of the comments that came up repeatedly were:

Need a standard emergency preparedness template for all licensed facilities. It should be a "do it yourself" type thing. What would a day program need to do; what would an assisted living facility need to do to meet specific needs, prepare emergency kits, evacuate in place.

Present a "demo" of a "special needs" plan that is in place, has been tested and works (i.e. for evacuation).

Please send answers to questions being explored to attendees. Also, update with new creative ideas would be great.

I encourage all folks involved to complete sensitivity training for working with people with disabilities; not only for shelter interaction but also for making presentations.

Would like to hear more about how providers could prepare better.

It seemed like the speakers did an effective job of identifying and describing potential challenges, but I do not feel like I learned much in terms of, "How to meet those challenges."

It made me more aware that although we have a plan in place and in theory it can help save lives much more needs to be done, much more!!!

Emphasize individual responsibilities for evacuation stages people assume, the government will take care of them.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Ensure that consumers with or advocates for people with disabilities and seniors are invited to the planning table from the beginning rather than as an afterthought. Make sure their needs are accommodated so they're able to attend the meetings. At the meetings, address how to accommodate their needs during emergencies.
2. Invite Virginians with disabilities and seniors to participate in exercises to test the plans.
3. Provide shelter managers additional information on adapting general population shelters to accommodate people with a variety of abilities and disabilities when practical.
4. Provide all licensed facilities with a template emergency preparedness plan and an example of a 'good' plan that is in place and works.
5. Purchase transcripts of the CBERS sessions (all were recorded by CART operators) to address the issues and suggestions brought out during the seminars.
6. Place resources provided to CBERS attendees on the external website so that everyone can access them.